

SERMON

PREACH'D *August* 19, 1708.

Being a DAY of

THANKSGIVING

Appointed by AUTHORITY,

For Defeating the

Design'd Invasion;

AND THE

Victory near *Andenard*.

By JOSIAH WOODCOCK.

L O N D O N,

Printed by J. Humphreys, for J. Lawrence, at the Angel
in the Poultry, 1708.

SERMON

PREACHED AT NEW-YORK, 1773.

Being a DAY of

THANKSGIVING

Appointed by AUTHORITY

for keeping the

RECEIVED



VICTORY OVER ANIMISM.

By JOSHUA WOODCOCK.

LONDON:

Printed by J. Johnson, for J. L. in the Strand, 1773.

1 CHRON. XXIX, II, 12.
Thine, O Lord, is the Greatness and the Power, and the Glory, and the Victory, and the Majesty: for all that is in the Heaven and the Earth is thine. Thine is the Kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as Head above all.

Both Riches and Honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all, and in thine Hand is Power and Might, and in thine Hand it is to make great, and to give Strength unto all.

THESE are the Words of King David, in which, after a long Series of Victories, and Train of glorious Successes, he ascribes the Honour of them to the infinite Greatness and supreme Authority of God, who reigneth over all Things, and disposeth them by an uncontrollable Dominion.

As God by a very illustrious and distinguishing Act of his Providence had rais'd him to that eminent Dignity which he enjoy'd, and had after his ascending the Throne, as well as before, bless'd him with great Deliverances, and renown'd Conquests over his Enemies: so in the last Chapters of this Book of *Chronicles*, he expresses his full Satisfaction in the Divine Goodness, and celebrates it for

the Riches, Honour, and Triumphs, it had granted him.

And particularly now, drawing near to the end of his Reign, he prepared all Things for the building of a magnificent Temple, which *Salomon* his Son was to finish, and contributed very largely to it himself, and had the Pleasure to see the People do like him: And then reflecting from whom he received all the Blessings of his Reign, he anticipates the Praises of the Temple, and gives a Pattern for them, by rendering the Glory of all his Prosperity to God, the first Mover in his Successes, and chief Director of them.

This he doth in my Text, performing his Devotion in a great Change and Variety of Expressions, suitable to the lively Sense of the Majesty of God, which he had upon his Mind and Thoughts, and the profound Reverence and Veneration which he had for his Almighty Power and Authority.

In these Expressions let us particularly turn our Minds to the Consideration of three Things.

I. A Declaration of the Greatness and Majesty of God.

II. His universal Government, and unlimited Reign over all Things.

III. That by virtue of this his Greatness and absolute Reign, he is enabled to make all those, whom his Providence shall favour, great, and to give Strength unto them.

I. We

I. We have, in the Words of my Text, a Declaration of the Greatness and Majesty of God. *Thine, O Lord, says David, is the Greatness, and the Power, and the Glory, and the Victory, and the Majesty.*

The Notion of a Deity implies in it all imaginable Perfection.

God would have been infinitely happy, and absolutely sufficient in himself, throughout all Eternity, if the Heavens had never been stretched forth, nor the Foundations of the Earth laid.

But since he hath erected this admirable Structure of the World, and furnish'd it with all its various Parts and Inhabitants, he hath set before the Eyes of Mankind the brightest Monument of his infinite Glory; and by the vast and immense Distance of all his Creatures from him, he hath given us to know, *that he is exalted as Head above all*; and so highly exalted, that the Prophet *Isaiah* represents it in such an emphatical Strain, as ought to beget in us the deepest Humility, when he declares, that *All Nations are before God as nothing, and are counted to him less than nothing, and Vanity*, Isa. 40. 17.

And no wonder, that all things should be vilified, and disparag'd to the utmost Extremity, in Comparison of God, if we reflect on the illustrious Attributes and Excellencies of his Nature.

'Tis one of his Excellencies *to be present every where, and to admit no Bounds*; so that whilst all Creatures are confined to one Place, the wide World in all its Latitude and Extent, cannot comprehend and limit the Creator of it; but he

he filleth all Places and Things with his Immen-
 sity, and No Man can go from his Spirit, nor fly
 from his Presence, tho' he should ascend into Heaven,
 or descend into Hell. Canst thou by Searching find
 out God, says Zophar the Naamathite in Job? Canst
 thou find out the Almighty to Perfection? It is as high
 as Heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than Hell, what
 canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the
 Earth, and broader than the Sea.

Let us next reflect on the Infinite Knowledge
 and Understanding of God; in which also he is in-
 comprehensibly exalted above all other Beings, since
 nothing escapes his comprehensive View, no not
 the most clandestine and hidden Secrecies; no not
 the Thoughts of the Heart; even these are open to
 the all-seeing Eye of God, and known to him be-
 fore they are known to our selves: so 'tis said
 by the Psalmist, that he knoweth our Thoughts afar off,
 i. e. as some interpret it, he knoweth them before
 they come into our Minds.

The Omnipotence of God is another shining Demon-
 stration of his Greatness and Glory: For whereas
 all other Beings are straightned in their Powers,
 and capable of performing few things, in Com-
 parison of what they cannot do: God alone hath
 that Almighty Arm, to which nothing is im-
 possible; yea, to which nothing is difficult and
 uneasy.

I call the Heavens and the Earth, the Air, and
 Waters to witness for this, which with all their
 Hosts and Inhabitants, and various Parts, were pro-
 duced by the sole Orders of the divine Word. And
 what is there after this, but must be very practi-
 cable and feasible to the Power of that God
 that

A Thanksgiving Sermon.

7

that could bring all things out of nothing by his irresistible Command. It cannot therefore seem strange, that David, exalting the Greatness, Power, and Majesty of God in my Text, should add, as an undeniable Proof and Illustration of it, that *all that is in the Heaven and the Earth is God's.*

II. The Second Thing I propos'd to shew, was, That God hath an universal Government, and unlimited Reign over all Things. *Thine is the Kingdom, and thou art exalted as Head above all. Both Riches and Honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all.*

There's nothing appears more reasonable, than that he, who is the Almighty Cause of the World, should be also the Governour of it. And there's nothing can give so just and rightful a Title to Government, as God hath by his being the Maker of all Things. He must necessarily have an indisputable Right to a Dominion over his own Works; His Subjects are his own Creatures, and by his forming them, he has obtain'd an unquestionable Jurisdiction and Authority over them. It was *he that made us, and not we our selves*; we therefore hereby become his People, and the Sheep of his Pasture. So when 'tis said in my Text, *All that is in the Heaven and the Earth is thine*, 'tis immediately subjoin'd, as the Result of God's being the Maker and Possessor of all things, *Thine is the Kingdom, O Lord.*

It would be endless to collect the various Testimonies of the sacred Scriptures, which ascribe this Lordship, and Government to God over all his Works.

Let

Let it suffice to take Notice, that he is often called *Lord and King*, and particularly *King of Kings*, and *Lord of Lords*; that the Earth is *subjected to him* because he reigneth; and that he is said to *rule in the Armies of Heaven*, and amongst the *Inhabitants of the Earth*.

This is a Doctrine so well founded, not only on the Holy Scriptures, but on Reason, that it hath been acknowledg'd in the Schools of the Heathen, as well as in the Church of God. The wisest of the Philosophers of the *Gentiles* have own'd and taught it.

It must indeed be confest, that *Epicurus*, an Head of one of their Sects, taught otherwise; and to secure the Tranquility and Ease of his Deity, takes him off from all Business and Concern, and gives him an eternal *Quietus* and Repose, upon a Notion, that it would be an Interruption to his Happiness to look abroad into the World, and mind any of the Affairs of it.

So *Lucretius*, describing his Master's Sentiment, thus expresses it;

*Omnis enim per se divum natura necesse est
Immortali aeo summâ cum pace fruatur,
Semota ab nostris rebus, sejunctaq; longe.*

With some other Verses to the same Purpose, intimating, that it is necessary that God should enjoy an eternal Repose, at a great Distance from us and our Affairs; that he doth not trouble himself about us; is all-sufficient, and doth not need us; is neither pleas'd with any of our Performances, to reward us; nor ever angry with us, to punish us.

This

This Opinion, tho impious and indecent for any one to hold it, yet seem'd better to become the Poet, (who uses to deal in Fables) than the Philosopher.

But if *Epicurus* had so Romantick a Vanity of Imagination, as to fancy the World to be made of Atoms, or little Particles of Matter meeting harmoniously together, without any Design, and uniting together by meer blind Chance into such exquillite and nice Order, and so beautiful a Frame as the World; (a Fable exceeding the Incredibility of all *Ovid's Transformations*;) If, I say, *Epicurus* had so ridiculous an Imagination about the forming the World: 'tis no wonder that, agreeably to his first Hypothesis, he should go on to blunder farther, and make Chance and Confusion to be the Governours of the World, as (according to him) they were the first Makers of it; or, which is the same, to leave it without any Government at all.

This Opinion of *Epicurus* made some of the wisser Men among the Heathens, such as *Tully*, *Plutarch*, and others, severely censure him; and it was not thought uncivil to strike him out of the List of Philosophers; yea, it was urg'd against him, that there were such Men as excell'd his Deity, Men of an active Spirit and Life, who abhorr'd Idleness, and took a great deal of Satisfaction and Pleasure in doing good, particularly in doing good to their Country.

It ought to be far from all to entertain so unworthy a Notion of God, as that he deserts the World, and shuts himself up, and retires into an unactive Solitude, and neglects all Concerns, least he should be weary of ruling, and tired out with Business. This is to humble the Almighty Being into too inferior and mean a Likeness with our selves, who are subject to grow faint with over-acting.

But since the God whom we acknowledge to be the Maker of Heaven and Earth, is an infinitely perfect Being, and incomprehensibly above us, and all things: He therefore never can grow weak, and languish, tho continually active, and exerting his Power and Authority throughout his universal Kingdom:

Nor can he by supervising and managing the Affairs of the World, disturb his Tranquillity and Happiness, because it must be allowed to a Being of such absolute Perfection, as with the greatest Reason we judge God to be, that whatsoever he doth, is with the greatest Facility; that all things are most easy to him; and that none of the Imperfections of Toil, Labour and Tiresomeness which affect us, are any way incident to the Divine Nature.

Now whereas some have rais'd Objections against God's Government of the World, from some pretended Defects in the Management of it; there's more Reason to conclude, that the greatest Defect, nay the only one, is in their own Understandings; which

which being finite and narrow, and beneath the Wisdom of God, as the Earth is beneath the Heaven; it cannot be the least Wonder, that it should not be able nicely to judge of, and comprehend all the Methods, Designs and Ways of Divine Providence.

If there be Arguments sufficient to satisfy us that God governs the World, it would be egregious Folly to expect that he should lay all the Intentions and Transactions of his Government level with the Understandings and Apprehensions of his Creatures and Subjects.

There are Mysteries in divine Providence, and 'tis reasonable to allow that there should be so; yea, 'tis a greater Weakness in the Understanding to object against Providence, because of these Mysteries, than it is not to understand them.

How many Appearances are there in Nature; which, though they come before our Senses, and we are sure that they are, yet they baulk our Understandings, when we are curiously inquisitive, and prying into the *Modus* and Causes of them. And the wisest Naturalists find inextricable Difficulties to get over, even in their most diligent and indefatigable Searches?

And therefore in the last Chapters of *Job*, we have represented, not only by *Elihu*, but by God himself, many Secrets of Nature, enough to satisfy us abundantly, that all things may be wisely order'd

der'd and dispos'd by God's Providence, though there may be such Difficulties attend it, as are unaccountable to us, and which we cannot by all our Searching find out; — cannot find out to Perfection.

So that we ought upon the whole to admire and adore, where we cannot fully comprehend, after the Example of St. Paul, who exclaim'd, with a pious Veneration of the incomprehensible Wisdom of God, *O the Depth of the Riches, both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out?*

III. I proceed now to shew, That God by his Greatness and Government of all things, is particularly enabled to make those whom his Providence shall favour, great, and to give Strength unto them.

Both Riches and Honour, says my Text, come of thee, and thou reignest over all, and in thine Hand is Power and Might, and in thine Hand it is to make great, and to give Strength unto all.

Amongst the various Acts of God's Providence, and Government of the World, this is a very remarkable one, (exemplified by very many Instances in the Holy Scriptures) to dignify and exalt whom he pleases, to make them great, and to give Strength to them.

Let

A Thanksgiving-Sermon.

Let *Job* be a Witness of this, who, tho' reduced from Prosperity to Sackcloth and Ashes, and humbled to the very Dunghill; yet by the particular Favour of God, he was advanc'd to that Honour and Wealth, that tho' at first great, the latter End of him was more blessed than the Beginning.

Let *Moses* be a Witness of this, whom God exalted to be the Ruler of his People *Israel*, and to perform such wonderful and mighty things for them in the Land of *Egypt*, at the Red-Sea, and in the Wilderness.

Let *Joshua* and the Judges be Witnesses of it, who, by the Almighty Hand of God assisting them, *Jehud's* Kingdoms, out of Weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in Fight, turned to Flight the Armies of the Aliens.

Let the Kings of *Israel* and *Judah* be Witnesses of it, who in virtue of the divine Power, did so often triumph over their Enemies round about them.

Let *David* in particular, who indited the Psalm of my Text, be a Witness of it, whom God chose, and took from the Sheepfolds, from following the Ewes great with young, and brought him to feed Jacob his People, and *Israel* his Inheritance, whom he fed according to the Integrity of his Heart, and guided them by the Skillfulness of his Hands, *Psalm* 78. 71, 72, 73.

And how often do his Psalms declare the Greatness, Power, Glory and Government of God, for being his Shield, his Fortrefs, his strong Tower, against the Rage of his Enemies, for strengthening him against them, and giving him the Victory over them?

I proceed now to shew what Improvement may be made of what hath been said, and to apply it to the present Day.

The Use of what hath been said, is suggested to us by the two Verses, the one going before, the other following my Text; in which we learn to bless and praise God, and to give Thanks unto him.

For we read that David, in the Verse before, blessed the Lord before all the Congregation, and said, *Blessed be thou, Lord God of Israel our Father, for ever and ever. Thine, O Lord, is the Greatness,* &c.

And in the Verse immediately after, it follows, *Now therefore, O Lord, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious Name.*

In doubling his Praise, and making it both the Prologue and Epilogue to the Text, we are instructed to look upon it as a very necessary Duty, of a great Figure and Consequence in Religion, and very well adapted and suited to the Contemplation of God's Greatness and Majesty, his Kingdom and Reign
over

A Thanksgiving-Sermon.

15

over all things, and his making great, and giving Strength.

Let us therefore, as it is our indispensable Duty, render unto God this just Tribute; the only Tribute we are capable of paying him: *Because all that is in the Heaven and the Earth is his*, let us bless and praise his glorious Name:

And particularly, for the *Riches, and Honour, and Greatness, and Strength*, which he hath been pleas'd, out of his extraordinary Goodness, to grant unto this Nation; a Nation very highly favour'd by him, that seems to be his Delight, and which he hath distinguish'd, of late especially, with very signal and surprizing Blessings.

For as when we were near the Brink of Ruin and Destruction, he rais'd up for us a Deliverer, the late *King of Glorious Memory*, who sav'd us from the Dangers that then threaten'd us; so he hath bless'd us with a QUEEN, who makes it the Care of her Reign, to preserve and secure unto us those valuable Enjoyments, which her Predecessor redeemed for us from the Hand of the Enemy.

Under her Government, Religion, Liberty and Property, and whatsoever is most dear to us, find Protection and Countenance.

The Vertues of the Throne, the Wisdom of the Council, the Justice of the Courts, the Valour and Conduct of the Camp, do join together to recommend and praise it.

And

And such a long and glorious Train of Prosperity hath attended it, that one Year hath seem'd to contend with another, which should take Place in Honour and Success.

In short, *Her Majesty*, in her Government and Successes hath eclips'd the past Ages, is become the Glory of the present, and will be a shining Example to those that are to come; who in reading the History of *Great-Britain*, will be apt to pause at this Reign, and read it over again before they go farther.

Amongst the blessed Advantages of it, is the UNION between *England* and *Scotland*; which by how much it hath been attempted in vain by other Crowned Heads, by so much hath it added to the Glory of her Majesty's Reign, to accomplish and perfect it, notwithstanding the Difficulties that have attended it.

'Tis our Happiness to be Inhabitants of the noblest Island in the World: An Island very large and populous; of a very good Climate and Soil; fruitful, and abounding in all things necessary for Life and Refreshment; opulent and wealthy, and of an excellently well constituted Government; only we were divided into two Kingdoms, subject to interfere, clash, and war with one another, by means of different Interests and Counsels, enough to threaten us with the Loss of all the valuable Blessings which we enjoy, and make us fall an ignominious and contemptible Prey to our foreign Enemies.

An Island has the Advantage in it self of being better secur'd and fortified against its Enemies, than the Continent: For the Sea is a wide and deep Moat round about it; and its Shipping, especially if strong, and well supported with Trade and Riches, are its Walls and Bastions; but if the People within it are divided in Government, Interests and Affections, it then comes under the In-felicities of the Continent, where nothing is more common than for the Neighbouring Kingdoms, Countries and States, to fall out and quarrel; to invade one another on every slight Occasion; to commit horrid Rapines and Depredations, and harass one another with all the Miseries of War, of Fire, of Sword, and Blood-shed.

And this has been the unhappy Fate of *Great-Britain* in former times, whilst tho' an Island, yet like the Continent, divided into separate Governments and Interests, with distinct Princes; then did Ephraim *envy* Judah, and Judah *vex* Ephraim: Then were such Mischiefs done, such Barbarities and Cruelties committed, so many Inroads and Invasions made upon one another, so many Battles fought, such vast Numbers slain, such dismal Tragedies recorded in History, as are enough to make our Hearts bleed to call them to Mind, and to bring every *true Briton* heartily into the Interests of the UNION, and to inspire him with a Resolution to do all that lies in his Power to cultivate, strengthen, and improve it.

And more especially, since these dangerous Quarrels have given our Enemies abroad too seasonable Opportunities to execute their Designs upon us, which would now, in all Probability, be more pernicious than they have been in times of old.

If it should be said, that we have been too long Enemies to be reconcil'd, and unite: let it be rather said, to the Honour of Peace and Concord, that since we have been so long Enemies, it was high time to unite, to prevent the Dangers in View, with which we were threatened.

Some have seem'd to be afraid, that *two different Religions* would hinder the good Effects and Success of the UNION.

But God forbid that our *two Religions*, if they are really two different ones, should subject us to the dreadful Calamities in the Civil State, which seem'd to be the unavoidable Consequence of a Disunion, and Things returning again to the Government of two distinct Princes.

Each of these *two Religions*, with half the Goodness, Love, and Charity belonging to Christianity, would not only be satisfied, and rejoice in such an UNION, which consults the Strength, Safety, and Happiness of both Nations, but would endeavour to find out Means to unite themselves.

Though,

Tho', according to the Judgment of *St. Paul*, with Reference to the *Unity of the Church*, it may be well enough thought, that they are one already: For he makes the *Unity of the Church* to consist in *one Body, one Spirit, one Hope of our Calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all*, *Ephes. 4. 4, 5, 6.*

In these necessary and important Matters we are already agreed, and the Matters in Difference seem extra-essential to the Christian Religion, and to be of infinitely less Concern, than those in which our Sentiments are the same.

It was a just Observation of my Lord *Bacon*, in his Chapter *de Unitate Ecclesie*, in his *Sermones Fideles*, that, *Haud parum distant inter se Unitas & Uniformitas, i. e.* that Unity and Uniformity are two very widely different things.

And the little River *Tweed* might as well be suppos'd to make two distinct Islands; as our distinct Modes, and little Variations in Ecclesiastical Matters, make two Religions.

Whatsoever the pretended Danger of the *British UNION* may be, the Danger of not Uniting was both more formidable and more apparent.

France very well knew this, and that the *UNION* was our Interest, and that it was its Interest to dissolve it; and therefore attempted to crush it in its
In-

Infancy, and endeavour'd, whilst it was so young, green and tender, to blast and destroy it; for the Disappointment of which Design we bless and praise the Name of God, and offer up our Thanks this Day.

Under the Countenance of his auspicious Providence, with what swift Expedition was the Fleet got out, by Orders of the Government?

With what hasty Dispatch was the Enterprize of our Enemies defeated, by the Care and good Conduct of our Admirals? How quickly was the so much boasted of Invasion prevented, to the Shame and Confusion of those who undertook it?

For this let us magnify the Name of God, *whose is the Victory, and in whose Hand it is to make great, and strengthen.*

Such an Attempt disappointed, it's to be hop'd, will strengthen that UNION, which it seem'd intended to destroy; and cut off the Hopes of France, from ever forming such Alliances again with Scotland, by which it hath so often formerly disturb'd England.

In short, if for one and the same Island to have one Prince, if to have the same Government, if to have Jealousies taken away in Trade, by the same Liberty, and Communication of Commerce; if by that Commerce to encrease our Wealth to the Advantage of the whole; if to be sav'd from intestine Wars

Word and Blood, and all the Devotions that
were, and numerous Miracles that attend them;
and to be firmly joined with the constant
Encouragements of our Enemies, and thereby
by have our Religion, Liberties, Properties, and
whatsoever is most dear to us, the better secur'd:
It shall be most desirable Blessings: He us then
give all our Hopes to Almighty God, for his good
Providence, in bringing to pass this UNION,
for his protecting and defending it, and disappoint-
ing the Designs of our Enemies, to render it void,
and dissolve it.

Let us now turn our Thoughts and Prayers
to those Scenes of Success, which hath crown'd
this Year: A Success indeed expected by the Na-
tion, from the Courage and Conduct of a General,
who hath God for his Father, and his Father
for his God; and who, as often as he hath fought,
hath conquer'd, and taken in all the Places he hath
besieged.

Victory seems to have made him its prime Fa-
vourite, and to have resolv'd to gratify him in
all his Wishes, and in more perhaps than he could
presume to wish, if his military Qualifications did
not make his Merit equal to his Wishes.

Who Triumphs, and such bright Merit claims,
which man only conquers the Enemy, but almost
insurmountable obstacles in the way to attack
him; which conquers, notwithstanding Superi-
ty of Numbers, Advantage of Situation, Difficul-

A Thanksgiving Service
ty of Accels, Facigen of long Marches, and Ge-
nerals appointed by the Enemy, not only to com-
mand their Army, but to inspire it with Courage,
and communicate Vigour to it, by the Reputation
of their Valour and Conduct.

To what a lofty Height hath the Name of
MARLBOROUGH advanced the Honour and
Reputation of the British Nation throughout all Eu-
rope.

Britain, with such Generals, and such Brave
Forces, may not only be sufficient to restore the
Balance of Europe, but keep ambitious Princes in
awe, and frighten them from aspiring after Uni-
versal Monarchy.

But to the Lord of Hosts, to whom peculiarly be-
longs Greatness, and Power, and Glory, and Majesty,
and Victory, and who reigneth over all, and maketh
great, and giveth Strength as he pleaseth, let the su-
preme Honour be ascribed.

Let us celebrate the Praise of his good Provi-
dence over us, which hath defeated our Ene-
mies.

And let us offer up our humble Supplications
to him, that he would continue to favour and
bless the Arms of her Majesty and Allies with Vi-
ctory, till a secure and honourable Peace shall be
obtained.

And

And that we might engage the constant Patronage and Encouragement of Heaven, let us humbly humble our selves for our Sins, and forsake them, and live as becomes those, who have the Lord for their God, and have been greatly favour'd by him. Then may we have good Reason to expect a Continuation and Increase of Successes. When *God shall be on our Side, in vain shall Men rise up against us.* If he be not our Enemy, we need not fear any other; *For his is the Kingdom, and the Power, and Glory, for ever and ever.*

FINIS

A Thanksgiving

And that we might enjoy the constant favour
and encouragement of Heaven, let us improve
by humble our selves for our sins, and renounce
and forsake them, and live as becomes them, who
have the Lord for their God, and have been great
ly favoured by him. Then may we have good
Reason to expect a Continuation and Increase of
Successes. When God shall be on our side, in vain
shall we rise up against us. If he be not our
God, we need not fear any other; For his is the
Power, and the Glory, for ever and
ever.



FINIS